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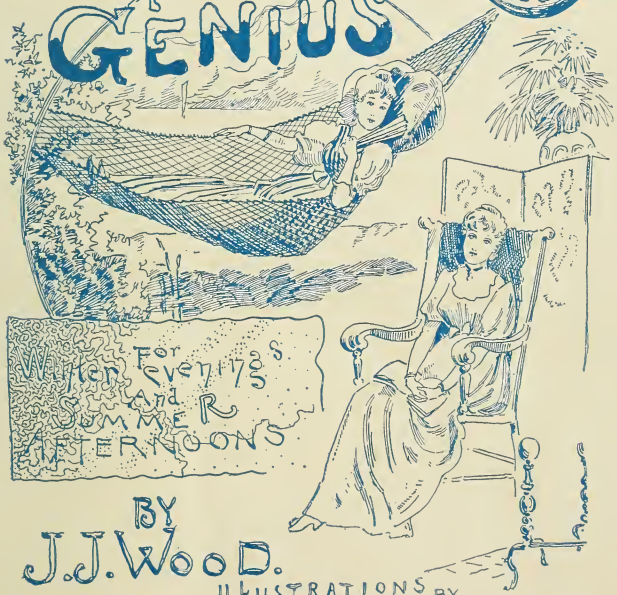
A SKETCH BOOK



Written For Even 17 8's And SUMMER AFTERNOONS

BY

J. J. WOOD.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY Hooper

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FOR

WINTER EVENINGS,

AND

SUMMER AFTERNOONS.

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY HOOPER.

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1887.

a.m.p. Oct. 9, 1931

JULIA,—* * * * * * * * Who marries me
Must lead a country life.

CLIFFORD,—The life I'd lead!
But fools would fly from it; for O! 't is sweet!
It finds the heart out, be there one to find;
And corners in 't where store of pleasures lodge,
We never dreamed were there! It is to dwell
Mid smiles that are not neighbors to deceit;
Music, whose melody is of the heart;
And gifts, that are not made for interest,—
Abundantly bestowed by Nature's cheek,
And voice, and hand! It is to live on life,
And husband it! It is to constant scan
The handiwork of Heaven. It is to con
Its mercy, bounty, wisdom, power! It is
To nearer see our God!

—THE HUNCHBACK.

DEDICATORY.

To friends, everywhere, who have cheered me on my way, this little white-winged messenger of peace and good will is inscribed. May it, like them, live long and prosper, is the hearty wish of—

THE AUTHOR.

Hudson, Mich., Nov., 1887.

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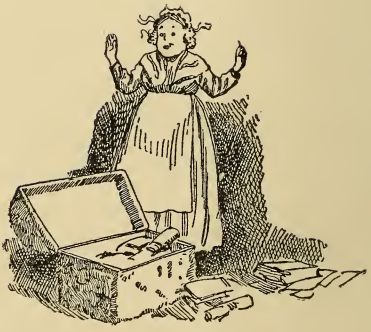


A Child of Genius.

AN odd character that I knew, and had a peculiar occasion to remember, was an eccentric bachelor of eminent respectability and polished manner, whose attire was faultless and his personal appearance exceedingly nice. He had a large brain development, and was greatly devoted to reveries—shall I say the reveries of a bachelor?—and I wonder did they give him the delight that the "Reveries" of one Ike Marvel gave me?

Absorption in thought, which made him oblivious to his surroundings, was his prominent peculiarity. With his hands behind his back, he would stand and

fixedly gaze at the corner of the room for hours at a time.

A secluded path in the garden was frequented by him, and worn smooth by his ceaseless tread to and fro. One terminus was marked by a stone, upon which he would rest his foot and remain involved in his own reflections by the hour. Some said that he was love-cracked early in life, and all noted his vagaries; yet he was a gentleman of culture, whose idiosyncrasies could no more be explained than could his entire devotion to leisure, without any visible means of support.

At stated times he would absent himself from the village on a trip,—ostensibly to the far West, evidently on business matters,—and upon his return he would be flush with funds, and liquidate the accounts he was accustomed to run.

I was a young tradesman then (that was fifteen years ago), and as the times were fairly prosperous, so was I. Among my customers I numbered this eccentric bachelor. I was pleased to place any merchandise he desired to his account; and one day, when he approached me for a temporary loan, I had no hesitancy in placing that to his account, too, which

was now assuming very comfortable proportions, and was looked upon as a nice nest-egg that would come handy by and by. In fact, he was soon gone upon his business excursion, and returned in due time, but there was no sign of liquidation, and various rumors pervaded the air, and were strongly discussed, as to the probable cause of the deficiency in his cash account.

The source of his income became a matter of debate. Some laid it to the rental of a mythical Nebraska farm, and others to a skillful manipulation of the pasteboards, and that his very absorption was a study of the cards, and that his foreign trips were to ply their use, and in fact, moreover, his suspected financial downfall was brought about in that way.

Be this as it may, he offered no excuses. To me he held out the idea that my claim could be amply secured by a bill of sale of the effects in his room, but I did not desire thus to question his ability to settle soon in full.

The situation with me was one of confidence. One creditor did accompany him, and surveyed the promised possessions that subsequently proved to be the property of the landlady, who, good, easy soul,

waddled about as fat as a dumpling of her creation, and nursed her rheumatic joints in oily gammon, that her bill was safe on account of the sumptuous wardrobe contained in his trunk; but when, a few weeks later, he disappeared, she was greatly astonished to find the sole contents of the trunk to be a few worthless papers. When and how his clothing had disappeared has remained a veiled mystery to her to this day.

The creditors that mourned his departure—the deep damnation of taking himself off—were few, but respectable; that is, he owed them respectable amounts. Vague rumors of his whereabouts came to our village, but time heals all sorrows, and it assuaged the bleeding hearts of his creditors as well, and he was fairly forgotten.

One day last summer, there came into my place a thin, shrunken shadow, a seedy resemblance of something far away, enveloped in a mismatched suit of clothing that did not have the renowned Hebrew fit, just like paper on the wall, and the antiquated tile that surmounted his head was antedated in style, and had been in glory long, long ago. "The hat, the breeches, and all that, were so queer." It was like

Rip Van Winkle come again, and my astonishment was as great as the villagers in the Catskills, when the apparition approached me with a sign of recognition. Like a flash it came over me that this was our quondam friend, and so it proved to be.

Vivacious and as well posted as ever, the old polish shone through the rusts and stains of time. If I had ever entertained the idea of collecting my claim, it vanished at once, and I was ready to say to the prodigal, now that he had returned, all would be forgiven, when he approached me with an inquiry about the old account, and made a statement that he was just getting his matters into shape, and would amply repay me, with interest.

The vagaries committed by our friend on his second advent are beyond recounting. He maintained an animated correspondence, carrying in his hand usually some evidently valuable document. I discovered, however, that the papers and envelopes that filled his pockets came from the waste baskets of the offices he frequented, and the addresses were as numerous as the designs on a crazy quilt. And in the midst of it all "he toiled not, neither did he spin," neither did he pay. He soon disappeared,

and whatever corner of the earth holds him now, I vouchsafe that he is thoroughly a gentleman of leisure, as well as a child of genius.

The landlady of the Live-and-let-live Inn,—dear old lady that she is—has handed me a package of papers discovered in the bachelor's trunk, that has remained unopened and forgotten in the garret all these years.

I have opened them, and found them to be a number of sketches and stories. The landlady thinks they were written by her eccentric boarder; and she avers, supported by the cook, that she distinctly remembers his chuckling to himself and slapping his thigh in a self-satisfied manner, with evident delight.

They reckoned this a sure proof that his brain was slightly turned. My inference is, that the supposed freaks were merely inspirations. I admit that the slight difference between the two conditions permits the claim of the landlady being possible. Be that as it may, they are offered to the public gaze through the subjoined pages, and if there is any dividend from their publication, it shall be divided among the creditors.

A DAY'S PLEASURE.

STOLEN slumbers are the sweetest. I love a bed of a morning, and am reluctantly wooed from its tender embrace, except it be like an occasion that I recall. The lake-dotted State of Michigan furnishes abundant delight for the fisherman. Follow me to Northern Lenawee, where the adjoining waters of Devil's and Round lakes glisten in the morning sun.

It has been decided that we shall be early risers for a morning's sport at trolling; indeed, we are early alert; it is three o'clock, just in the gray of the morning, and a hushed stillness pervades the landing, broken only by the early twitter of the birds. Our fervor overlooks the dew-dampened boat-seats, and we push from the shore, paying out the line as we near the outer row of rushes, the little silver spoon moving like a thing of life away in our rear.

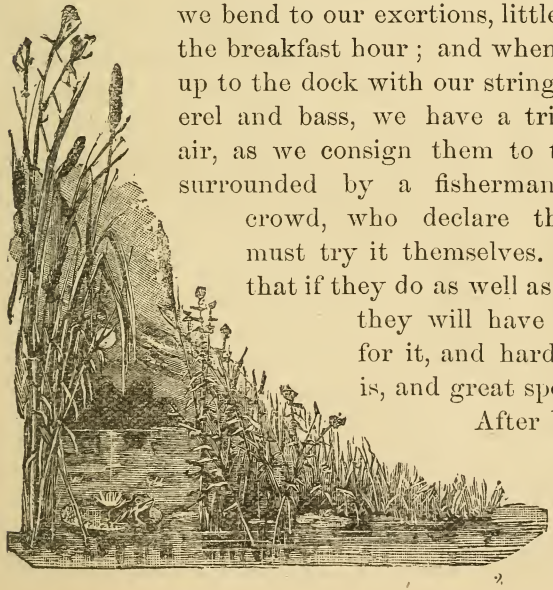
Fishing is like trusting to Providence; we don't know whether we will get anything or not. We can

feel the whirl of the spoon as the boat is propelled with a steady stroke, carefully guided along the edge of the reeds. A moderate breeze furrows the face of the water. It is a perfect morning for trolling, we have scarcely remarked, when—tug at the line—what is that we have struck, a reed? A half second of decision, and hand over hand we haul in the line, while the boat comes to a halt with the rower alert with his oars. We feel a stronger pull, and are quite sure about it now. It is nearing us, when "swish," a great open jaw protrudes from the water and makes a rush for it, while we redouble our exertions. Our prize endeavors to leap from the water and shake himself loose, but he is coming in too fast for that. All is excitement. He is a big one. The boat swings broadside to, and he attempts to rush beneath it. Beware of his striking the boat and freeing himself! We are just dexterous enough to stay the wary fellow and land him in the bottom of the boat, a surprise to ourselves.

The excitement and exhaustion of this moment is supreme. We are ready to fall, and do fall on the animate form of that pickerel. He reaches across the boat, and weighs—say six pounds. Now that we

have got him, the mystery is how to keep him, solved by Tom, who whips out his knife and severs his spinal column, and he lies helpless at our feet, and we are in a hurry to have the line out again.

The morning mists are rising o'er the waters, and the first rosy tint of early dawn is in the east, but we mind it not. It is royal sport, and we bend to our exertions, little heeding the breakfast hour; and when we pull up to the dock with our string of pickerel and bass, we have a triumphant air, as we consign them to the cook, surrounded by a fisherman-fevered crowd, who declare that they must try it themselves. We feel that if they do as well as we have, they will have to work for it, and hard work it is, and great sport, too.



After breakfast we have a glorious *siesta*, with

our cigars, in the shade under the oaks, passing the heat of the day. Our capital prize of the morning makes a princely feast for dinner. In the afternoon, Tom and Millie and Mattie and I, with a bucket of minnows, are prone to try this capital bait, conveniently anchored off the sand-bank, and entice the wily bass and festive perch.

Mayhap they will not be allured from their watery depths, and we seek the seclusion of Greenwood bay. Shut out from the world as idly at anchor we lay, and our boats hung between heaven and earth, is it a wonder that we have a kindred feeling in those mellow moments? We grow confidential, and the problem of life is solved without reserve, and the good, easy confidence established by the afternoon's chat, makes us better acquainted with the inner motives that impel our mysterious being. We leave the spot with reluctance, and have since recurred to its pleasures many, many times.

Round Lake country is *terra incognita* to us. Toward evening we hitch up Dolly,—the pony,—which sleek from the stable, ambles thither past pleasant farm homes that smack of thrift. The golden rod is waving by the wayside, and through a swampy section

pussy willows and the wild rose fringe the way, and we notice it will be a good place to gather cat-tails presently. Soon the road winds along the elevated banks of Round Lake, passing through the antiquated village of Geneva, with its single store and school-house perched on the hill; past the old white fort, the sole remaining relic of the hotels that flourished years ago, before Devil's Lake became known as a resort. Geneva was in its glory then. Here the country swains resorted from miles around, to the festive dance, and the semi-fashionable resort boasted of its one noted time when it even celebrated the Fourth of July in regular style, with a grand spread-eagle orator and a fire company from a neighboring city as a startling attraction. They boast to this day, the old inhabitants do, that the company never could pump the lake dry,—as though firemen would care much about water the Fourth of July!

But we leave the old resort behind us, with its reminiscences of landlords' pretty daughters, and the road bears us away from the lake until we come to a sign-board, and then we detour to the north, when we catch a glimmer of the lake again through a maple grove. We are on a lower level now. This is Lan-

don's, a secluded picnic ground. What sort of a place would this be to come to, with our friends, for a day or a week? We hail the antediluvian proprietor for information as to accommodations and charges. He comes limping through the gateway. We have to speak very loudly to him, but the gateway to his ears has long since been closed, and our attempt is fruitless. So we drive on.

Now the road is by the very edge of the water, through sand and gravel washed up by the waves that beat that eastern shore, and Dolly pulls with more vigor. The sun is sinking in the west, and the soft, luxuriant, incense-laden breeze wafts to us over the waters, blown from the golden gates of the sun. The fishermen are hurrying homeward. The tinkling cow-bells sound in the distance. Across the lake, in the dusk of evening, the lights of Geneva glow. It is an hour of enchantment.

We skirt a hill, and the way winds to the west. We are uncertain of its dim outlines faintly marked through the woodland that we enter,—a leafy bower, a veritable lover's lane. Ah! here might old loves grow new, and our vows again be said, so absorbed in the spirit of the scene are we. The fire-fly flits

about, and flashes his jack-o'-lantern around us, and the roadway emerges between the two lakes, and we have soon completed the circuit of Round Lake, and Dolly's head is turned toward our quarters at Beardsell's, on Devil's Lake.

The small steam launch, "Little Devil," sounds the signal whistle at the wharf, and we hurry aboard for a complimentary ride with the proprietor. We are on pleasure bent, and whither shall we go? There is a dance at Allen's, the landing below, and thither we turn the prow. We are sandwiched in, close companions, and are a jolly crew as ever sailed. The little engine pulsates and wheezes at regular intervals. Some one starts a familiar air, and all join in the chorus. Far over the waters, in the calm evening hour, sound our voices, echoing in the dark outlined forests that line the shore. The starlighted heavens and the placid lake and the darkness is a contemplation of solitude broken only by our own voices and the cry of the startled night bird. In the midst of our gayety we are surrounded by the vast silent night, stretching away into eternity. But the present is ours, and the future in eternity shall be.

The lights at Allen's loom up ahead, and they sig-

nal the pilot from the dock where the boat is soon anchored, and we seek the sounds of the violin under the spacious canvas pavilion. It is a popular ten-cent dance, and we mingle with the gay throng where a pauper is a prince, and the prince jostles the pauper. Paupers are common in America, but the most of them amount to something.

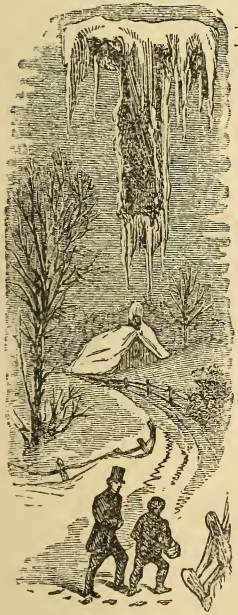
We "alamand left" and "right and left four" and "promenade all to seats," until the warning whistle of the steamer calls us away from the scene of innocent revelry and riot. The little craft soon lands its precious cargo at its own wharf, and we are quickly wooed to sweet slumbers, after a day's pleasure.

"Let the bell toll! A saintly soul floats on the Stygian River."

Since a day's pleasure, the boat with Tom and Mattie has drifted beyond the lake, through the limitless sea, and has anchored in Paradise. Have you seen through the morning mists of heaven the bright bow of promise of immortality? The mistakes of your life have been many. Beware, oh! beware—

"And all should cry, Beware, beware
And weave a circle round him thrice.
And close their eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of Paradise."

THE YANKEE SCHOOLMASTER.



THE old white school-house, where lot threw a few of my boyhood years, though it stood amid bleak surroundings, is an oasis of life whose foliage refreshes the mental man.

To this common seat of learning, in the winter-time, flocked sixty odd youngsters of the district, "toiling up the hill of science," as the schoolmaster was wont to say.

The pedagogue that presided over the destinies of the youth of the neighborhood in winter, was a quaint specimen of the true Yankee, capable of teaching school winters, farming a little summers, and ready to turn a hand at peddling queensware between times. It was said that he

could drive as sharp a bargain over a bit of crockery as any tradesman that ever throve.

His injunction to us was to "make your mark; even the snake that crosses the road makes his mark," and having said that he kept us well in hand by making us "toe the mark."

There was a faint suspicion that he enjoyed a pun. He has long since been forgiven for perpetrating one on tobacco. "Locomotives use tobacker," he said; 'They chew, chew to go ahead, and chew, chew to back 'er." Such a pun would be fatal now. We survived it. The "survival of the fittest"?

In the vicissitudes of his early life in Ohio he had been a boat captain on the canal, and had in his service a lad that had, in the *ante bellum* days of which I write, risen to some eminence. He held him up to us as a shining light, little thinking that his embryo hero would become famous as the boy that rose from the tow-path to the White House.

Among the queer characters of that vicinity was Uncle Billy. The particular thing he seemed destined to do was to haul red oak wood to the market. Red oak isn't famed for its excellence. His place got to be called "Red oak farm." A peculiar habit

of Uncle Billy that we observed as he would be driving by would be a continual "click," "click," to his team, and an urging shove of the lines in the most nervous manner. The fit of the old gray wool hat that hung limp about his face,—the stiffness of the rim having long since been lost,—never did quite suit him. He would give it a half turn, and ere he had driven another rod, hitch it would go again clear around. What was gained by the change was not apparent to the observer.

The mother of Solon Jones undoubtedly named him after a great man, but he never filled expectations. Solon of old might have been wise, and his opinion much sought after; but if the latter-day Solon had an opinion, he generally managed to make it reach both sides of a question, so that, like Jack Bunsby's, "It was an opinion as was an opinion." And if his tongue was wound up, with the same precaution of Captain Cuttle's watch, "Lord, how it would run!" as we observed when we ran across him cutting cord wood in the clearing opposite the school-house.

Down at the foot of the hill was the queer house of Pat Fitts, a veritable pig-sty, that would be fash-

ionable enough now, you know. Pat's clock was a quaint affair—a hole cut in the south side of the house. Sunshine on marks upon the floor denoted the time. Pat's clock run down cloudy days.

These were some of the friends and neighbors of the Yankee schoolmaster and his pupils. Under his banner we flourished.

Daylight was let into the community by the addition of a large number of books to the old school library. What a view we had of the outside world in Irving's Sketch-book, Trowbridge's Father Brighthopes, and kindred volumes! What a field of action they opened up for us! The ambitions of life are formed in school days; their fulfillment and failure fall to later times.

Under one of the desks in that old school-house lies a slate with a perfect sketch of a newspaper. The heading, "The Wolverine Citizen," is in a neat old English text. A bit of poetry adorns a column, followed by a melancholy love tale. There is a spicy local column, and it is altogether a model newspaper. That youth has an ambition for journalism which he has long since confided to his seat-mate, who has developed similar aspirations; and their waking hours,

and dreaming ones too, are devoted to thoughts of how they will fashion their aims so that their ambitions will be fulfilled.

The spelling school, the debating society, and the fugitive magic lantern show are incidents of the winter. The crowning success is the exhibition at the close of the term. A stage with curtains drawn on wires has been improvised. The room has been decorated with juniper from the swamp, and the final night comes, with an appreciative audience, and the successful *debut* of the youthful actor and the machine poet is assured.

Ring down the curtain on the Yankee schoolmaster and his pupils. Ring up the curtain of real life, and we discover from that old school, the bard that sings the homely songs of farm life, and enchants the world. We discover, in honorable positions in life, in places of trust, a large percentage of the scholars of that country school. We see happy homes, bright children, and the glorious future. All honor to the Yankee schoolmaster and his co-laborers!

THE OLD CHURCH BELL.

A SUMMER'S day, thirty years ago, Frank B. and I were truants on a village street together. The bell in the old church tower was just striking the hour of noon, when I proposed to him a jaunt four miles away to my cousin's in the country.

Filled with the prospect of rural delights, we pursued our way, and it was well into the afternoon ere we arrived at our journey's end, and on inquiry at the old farm-house, found that my cousin, some years my senior, was down by the spring brook with some neighboring lads.

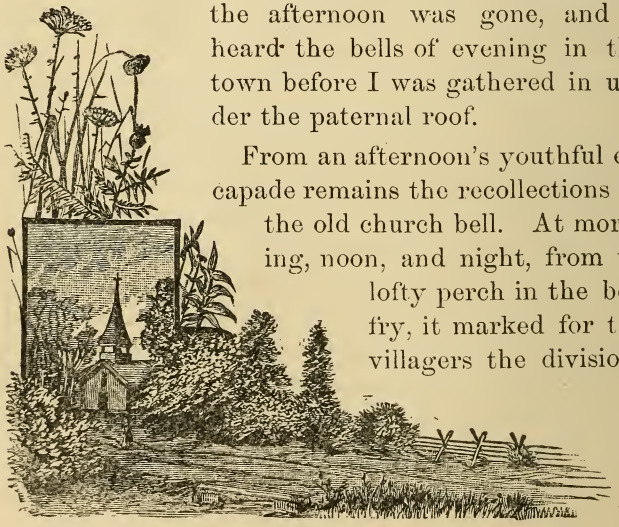
Now on a former visit to this same old farm-house, I had been sent of an errand across the farm and fields, and along a secluded section of the spring brook had come across a scene of animate and inanimate nature that fills me with a delightful recollection to this day.

No less, as it now seems to me, than a whole flock of stately storks and cranes in all the meditative and dignified postures that one might fancy, were there, some on one leg and others with their necks shortened up like an old man in his dreams. Many were pursuing frogs and minnows, and all were ranged up and down the narrow stream, so that, lest I "disturb their ancient and solitary reign," I made a long detour after I had feasted my young wonder on a scene rivaling any in the Abyssinian tale of Rasselas in the Happy Valley.

Frank B. and I found my cousin and his companions. They were busily engaged in spearing water-snakes with improvised spears, fashioned of wires fitted into long poles; and being suspected as truants, and known to be town boys, we were not met with that particularly warm reception that suited us.

The afternoon being on the wane, we soon started on our homeward way. A short distance on our return journey, the brook crossed the highway, and we seated ourselves by the road bridge, under the shadow of an old red barn, and hunted crabs—great fellows with tongue-like claws, that went backward with more ease than forward, like some people we know.

We were walking along wearily enough on our return trip, when my father drove up in a carriage from town, having an inkling of the direction of our wandering, and justly, as I now believe, looking on me as the instigator of the tour, took my companion tourist into the vehicle, compelling me to continue the journey according to the original plans and specifications, afoot, while their equipage wheeled away in the dust. It was not far, but the afternoon was gone, and I heard the bells of evening in the town before I was gathered in under the paternal roof.



From an afternoon's youthful escapade remains the recollections of the old church bell. At morning, noon, and night, from its lofty perch in the belfry, it marked for the villagers the divisions

of the day. For years, old Aleck Hall, the bellman, did faithful service. Long since, the old church bell tolled for him the evening of his life, and he was laid away to be called when the last trump is sounded.

Years and years ago, the old bell was superseded in secular use by the advent of the town clock. Relegated to Sabbath service in tones of gospel melodies, it pleadingly says, *Come*, COME, COME; while on the self-same street of thirty years ago, the hands of the town clock point with certainty, time and eternity for all mankind, in figures so large that "he who runs may read."

THE BRIDGE.

SINCE the days of David, mankind has loved to seek the cool green waters. We stood by the iron railing on the highway foot bridge, and our view was directed up the river, surmounted a few rods above us by a substantial stone railway bridge, the arch forming a vignette inclosing the lovely view that attracted our attention.

The scene is the growth of circumstances. The stone bridge was constructed a few years ago; then the workmen straightened the tortuous course of the stream beyond, and finally a large wooden tubing, to convey the water from the race above to the mill at our left, was placed across the river under the bridge, forming a graceful waterfall, while the waste water from the mill poured over its gates in a copi-

ous cascade. Nature then completed the scene. Straight-away the banks have become thickly lined with willows that are mirrored in the glassy waters, and a number of hitherto barren sand-banks have become coated with green, and lie in the back-water of the improvised dam, like summer islands in a placid sea. Caught up by the painter's brush, the scene would grace the fairest canvas.

The spot is historic as well as romantic. Near it, ere the virgin forests were disturbed, the little river was crossed by the trail of the tribes of Baw Beese and Meteau, leading from the head waters at Devil's Lake to Squawfield, a cleared place down the valley, where the dusky maidens raised Indian corn, while their liege lords and masters hunted the game in the fastnesses of the Michigan forests, or idly lounged about the wigwam.

There is a legend of the lake:—

"There 's a lake with a legend attached to its name,
Whose cold, dark waves are of world-wide fame;
And the wood stretching back from its steep, craggy bank."

So the poem goes. The story is that an Indian warrior was about to wed a princess of his tribe, when a stealthy Mohawk stole the bride while she

was seeking some red berries in the bushes on the banks of the historic water, with which to deck her regal form at the marriage feast. He sought to escape with his prize by the lake, tempestuous and dark, pursued by the warrior in a birchen bark. The chieftain put an arrow through his foe, but the storm-swept lake enveloped and engulfed him and his queen of the forest.

"Their struggles were vain their lives to save,
And they sank, O lake, neath thy cold dark wave."

The ghost of the Mohawk is presumed to have haunted the locality, gliding from shore to shore in a phantom canoe. The unlettered sons of the forest saw in the storm-cloud, that brought disaster, the hand of the evil one, so to this time remains the Indian name Michimanitou, signifying lake-of-the-evil-spirit, or in homely English, "Devil's Lake."

It was at one of the harvest dances, near half a century ago, that the Pottawattamies were surrounded at Squawfield by the regulars from Detroit, and conveyed to the West. It is related of Indian John, the white man's friend, that he had in his possession, when captured, a gun borrowed of a settler, and that he returned hundreds of miles to de-

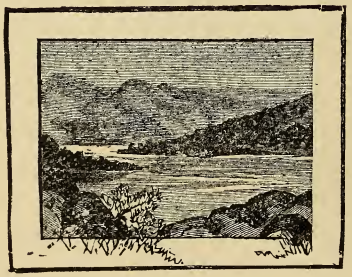
liver it to its rightful owner, "Smokaman John Conwine," as he called him. This is an instance of the red man's honor not in accord with some views of their treachery. Baw Beese and a remnant of his tribe escaped to Canada, and the noble chieftain died on the shores of Georgian Bay, an alien from the home of his fathers, but his name lives in the landmarks and history of his country.

Neighbors were distant in those days. The first bridge over the classic stream was built by two women of the early settlement, whose homes were separated by the Tiffin, a barrier to their visits. At low water they bridged it with single slabs which they themselves carried from the rude saw-mill. Carpenters' horses formed the abutments of this primitive foot-bridge, but transit was secured, and regular old-fashioned visits were frequent.

Now on either hand stretches away the pleasant and thrifty village of Lanesville; Squawfield is rich pasture land. The fruitful valley contains fine farms; Devil's Lake has become a noted pleasure resort, where the harvest festival is resorted to by tens of thousands.

The pale-faced pleasure-seeker sees in the storm-

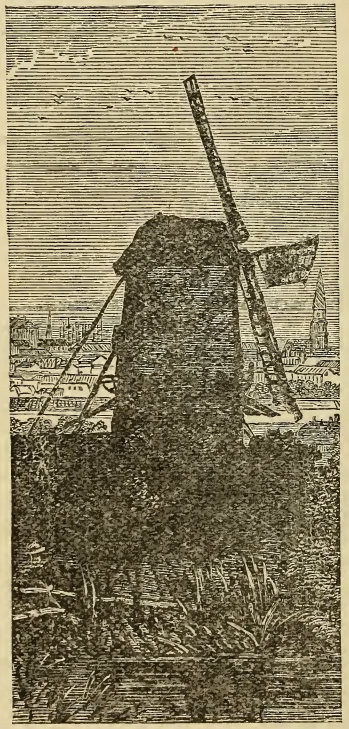
cloud the hand of nature; and when the roll of the white cap on the angry lake has ceased, the sun smiles on a scene of beauty surrounding the lake in the green woods, and over the bridge of the Tiffin rolls the wealth of empire, as it speeds with the iron horse on its eastward and westward way.



The only reason that I am not at this moment wearing wooden shoes in Holland, and swearing in Low Dutch, is because my great, great, great grandmother, a young lady of the nobility in the land of dykes and ditches, fell in love with my equally great grandfather, and the match not being countenanced—I suspect it was a desperate case—the young couple fled to New Amsterdam in some of the early successors to the Half Moon, making the voyage in the course of a few months, and were married. Then the world, that had in the meantime stood still, moved again. It often does stand still for two hearts that wildly beat as one, and when it does start up it has a mighty lively pace.

Not so with my ancestors, however. True, they

had moved from an old world to a new, but my great grandfather must have settled down so peacefully in Manhattan with his pipe and cabbages, and my great grandmother must have been engaged in keeping the floors polished and other household arts new to her, and the Knickerbockers, Schermerhorns, Ten Broecks, and Joneses must have proved such good neighbors, perhaps going to the remarkable extent of returning some borrowed articles, — good, kind neighbors, who, if intrusted with a family secret, found some one to help them keep it, — that my ancestors in New Amsterdam became oblivious to their possessions in Old Amsterdam.



But for this bit of independence manifested by my great grandmother, in marrying the man of her choice, I suppose that at this time I might have been a high and honorable burghmaster, or leastwise the superintendent of a windmill in that distant land. I imagine myself seated on the sunny side of the windmill, dreamily sitting on a bench with my back against the mill and my legs extended. I wear the funniest cap on my head, and have on the queerest blouse, and great barn-door breeches that reach nearly to my armpits, and terminate in a shortage below the knees.

The wind whirls the spectral arms of the windmill in my care. What care I for affairs of state? There are no doughty Don Quixotes, bent on knight-errantry, prowling about to assail my charge, under the delusion that it is a foe. My mind is at tranquillity; I take phlegmatic puffs at my pipe, and dreamily picture, in the whiffs of smoke, my Frau and the flaxen-haired babies. That job would suit a day-dreamer like me.

Then I picture myself in the elevated position of burghmaster. With what an imperious and lofty manner I wield the scepters of power in my small

domain ! With what august veneration the decisions on the weighty matters brought for my judgment are regarded ! How I sustain the dignity of the high office, with a fat, round belly touching my knees, and my short, dumpy legs barely reaching under the official table. There is terror in the frown over my heavy, iron-bowed spectacles. Over my cup and pipe I am prone to fall asleep, and then the young rogues in my service are wont to do grievous things ; and when I am awakened by the smack of a kiss, I hit the table with a thunderous rap of the fist, and sternly reprove them. I may, some day, give my sanction and blessing to Hans and Laura, but they must have proper regard for my official presence. When I preside at a meeting of the high and honorable aldermen, I fill the seat with dignity and rule with sternness. These pictures are dispelled by the thought that, of a fact, I am lean and lank, and never in America have I aspired even to the dignity and proportions of an alderman.

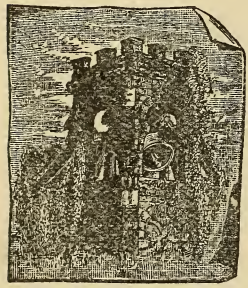
Now just why the effort, in my time and generation, to secure our vast estates in Holland failed, I have forgotten. It is one of the recollections of childhood. How we listened to my mother, and noted the

affirmations of my father. Ah, wealth, you have a golden ring that makes us all luxurious. We are paupers to-day, but will be princes to-morrow. Yes; but then to-morrow is a debtor that seldom pays. Yet there is a glory in anticipation that pays to-day; let us grasp and cherish it while we may.

I remember the construction of the family tree: how the genealogy was traced in the numerous conferences of relatives, and we were located on a branch of the tree,—the great expectations and the assessments—let us not forget the assessments. A prominent relative had, for a valuable consideration, interested himself in our behalf, and was pushing investigations, so it was said, among the old records. A great barrier to the establishment of the lineage and proving our claims to the inheritance was the destruction, by fire, of the old Dutch church in New York City, by the British, during the Revolutionary war, and the consequent destruction of the record of the marriage of my ancestors.

The failure to supply this missing link of evidence is all that prevents my joining the nobility in Europe to-day. Having never been able to obtain a fortune in Holland, or elsewhere, I am consoled with the

thought that my very great grandmother conferred a greater blessing on me by making me a citizen of this great and glorious Republic.



I have relinquished all claims to my Dutch possessions. I suppose that if William of Orange had failed, and the efforts of Philip II. had prevailed, they would have been my castles in Spain. Fortune has decreed differently with both Philip and me. The possessions are not ours. I am forced to this conclusion. Some may wait for dead men's shoes, but I will never wear my grandmother's boots.

THE PRINCE AND THE POET.

THE *dramatis personæ* of this recital will be, to begin with, a prince and a poet. The scene opens on the business portion of the main street of a village. The first act discloses Mr. Leon Isaacs, the prince, short and fat, florid and jolly, who halts his pony, attached to a red road wagon, in front of a country store. Enter street scene, from store door, Mr. Hieronymus James, poet if you please, long and lank, dark and retiring, bearing first a jointed fishing rod, a tin box of tackle, a canvas satchel, a broad-brimmed straw hat, and sundry fishing supplies, which he deposits alongside a similar outfit belonging to the prince, in the back part of the wagon.

The poet being seated in the vehicle, hands the prince a cigar and lights one himself, the pony mean-

time being set in motion toward their destination, ten miles away.

Their evident object is a fishing excursion, and their departure attracts the attention of the dull old street, which is awakened from a mid-summer's lethargic slumber by any relieving incident.

The little nag ultimately leaves the village behind, and by proper urging and vigilant reminders, actually, now and then, jogs into a trot. Like previous travelers over the same route, they discover that the road lies before them, and that if they go far enough they will, sooner or later, arrive at their destination.

The route lies through pleasant country roads, past a sleepy hamlet, with its solitary church. The only animated object is the blacksmith's forge, that is all aglow with its ruddy fires.

The travelers have wisely chosen the cool of the evening for their journey, and the second act opens at a semi-fashionable summer hotel, a long, low, two-story building, with inviting verandas, situated on the shores of one of their interior lakes.

The travelers are warmly welcomed by mine host of the inn. Their traps are stored in the waiting

room, and the pony placed snugly in quarters in the stable.

The inner man regaled, the after-supper cigar is lighted. Enter a bevy of ladies upon the scene—Mrs. Anne Belle Harding, a charming beauty; Mrs. Wells, an entertaining widow; Miss Jessie Ayres, an entertaining school-marm ; Mrs. Ayres, mother of the two latter ladies and general superintendent in charge of the pleasure-seekers, whose homes are in a distant city.

By courtesy of the landlady, the prince knows the whole party in two minutes and a half, and is all smiles and favors, while the poet retires behind his reserve, and is evidently bothered with the idea that anything should interfere with the prime object of the excursion—fishing. The prince, however, is quite a fisher of hearts.

Further addition is made to the party by the entrance of Mr. Thomas Jones, old and sear and rakish withal, a hulk old enough to have gone to Davy Jones's locker, it is true, and now here he is starting out for a new cruise with his young and doll-like wife, and with her marrying-her-daughter-off-for-money mother for chief mate.

It is easily perceived that Mr. Jones is patronizing and offensive, and desires to be regarded as something of a lion, having heralded himself as the first proprietor of a somewhat noted hotel in a great city. He regards these laurels a sufficient guarantee to warrant his claim for incessant attention and deference.

He has come to this quiet place to spend a few days of the honeymoon, and brought his mother-in-law along. She is a woman of fifty, aping the airs of twenty, and it is whispered about, "Why did n't he marry his mother-in-law?" Perhaps he did better, and married the whole family. They are to leave in the morning, however, and the party will be relieved of their affectation.

The curtain of night goes down on the scene, and the hotel is mantled in darkness. The silence is broken by the wash of waves on the shore, and by loud snores resounding through board partitions and mingling with the fierce cry of the musquito, vainly endeavoring to gain entrance through the net-protected windows, that he may pursue his victim to the death.

The scenic artist of early dawn has set the scene on a hot, panting, breathless morn. The lake lies

motionless and lifeless as a dead sea. The fisherman-fevered prince and poet have early arisen, and, with disappointed faces, note the unfavorable condition of the lake for their sport. There is surely no good fishing this morning, but they fly in the face of fate, and seek the favorite fishing grounds across the lake. But it is utterly useless, and they give it up. It is the opportunity, but not the time. They conclude to bide their time.

They are returning to the landing when they discover that the mother-in-law has hired a boatman, and is trying her luck at fishing, but la! it is nothing like fishing for a son-in-law, and the old lady is discomfited enough. That boatman though,—it becomes the settled idea of the prince and poet combined, that *he* could catch fish on dry land! The close condition of the atmosphere has, in the meantime, engendered rain, great spattering drops of which have begun to sift down upon the water, and the fishermen hastily seek the shore, and none too soon, for the storm is rapidly thickening and growing in intensity. Behind the curtain of the heavens they fire the lightning's flash and shake sheet-iron thunder.

Mr. Thomas Jones and his party have an early breakfast, and, despite the storm, are making hurried preparations to embark in the little steam launch that is to convey them to the railway station at the head of the lake, four miles away. The severity of the storm has no effect upon Jones and the captain of the craft, a little man, with no spare meat upon his bones, but with a heart in him like the heart of an ox. With large and well-rounded oaths he swears that the storm is no detriment to his making the trip.

The final exit of Jones and company is while the rest of the guests are at breakfast. He rushes into the dining hall, as if it was the last thing he would do on earth, and hands to one of the waiting girls, whom he imagines has done him a favor, a silver quarter. She smiles, and the guests shout, "Good-by, Jones!"

The storm seems to increase in fury, as the little craft makes her way across the raging waters, careening in the wind until they are lost to sight in the storm and wave. The captain afterward averred that it was a perilous passage.

The prince and poet are finishing their morning

meal when the latter is startled by a sudden admiring smile spreading over the face of his companion, caused, as he rapidly discovers, by a pretty waiting girl throwing a kiss at him from an adjoining entry-way,—an act that the prince is only restrained from returning by the publicity of his location. The incident would have utterly disconcerted the poet, but it only added zest to the meal for the prince.

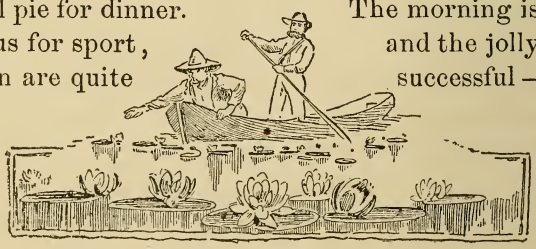
It is quite evident, also, that the ladies they met the previous evening are susceptible to the charms of the polished prince, Mrs. Anne Belle Harding in particular, and possibly some of the ladies might not be averse to a bashful poet.

The storm abates, and in the pleasures of the day it is easy to see the preference of the ladies expressed; and when Miss Jessie Ayres ceases rowing her boat long enough to throw her right hand on that portion of the anatomy commonly credited with containing the heart, and in tragic tones exclaims, "Be still, sad heart," the prince suggests to the poet

that it means him, and slaps him on the shoulder enthusiastically, saying, "Go in, old boy." But the "old boy" is timid and bashful, and it takes time to thaw out his reserve. Meantime, between fishing and flirting, the prince is having a jolly time.

In the evening the poet goes out to set some poles for night-fishing, and Miss Jessie suggests that she would like an eel. Sure enough, in the morning, when Hieronymus examines the set lines, he finds a medium-sized eel attached to one of them. It is consigned to the cook, and the ladies are informed of its capture. The last vestige of the poet's reserve vanished over the discussion about how that eel should be cooked.

When the fishermen took the boat to seek their prey that morning, Miss Ayres informed the poet that she believed she would have that eel made into an eel pie for dinner. The morning is propitious for sport, and the jolly fishermen are quite successful — one



very large bass in particular adorns their string, which they keep suspended from the oar locks in the water to keep it fresh.

After they have become satisfied with the size of their capture, they seek the outlet of the lake, where the pond lilies grow, thinking to lay some trophies at the feet of the ladies. They find some very fine ones, and are poling the boat through the lily pads when the prince exclaims, "See that fish!" and whirls the boat in the direction that he is calling attention to, captures it, and makes the surprising discovery that it is their own string that has broken loose from contact with the lily pads. So they narrowly escape losing the result of the forenoon's labor.

The handsome lilies are graciously received by the ladies, and the elated fishermen depart for their afternoon's fishing with light and exultant hearts. But when they return, at evening, there is more commotion about the dock and grounds. There has evidently been a large number of new arrivals. A number of boats, with strange faces, are seeking the pleasures of the evening on the lake. Past our friends in grand style there sweeps an elegant four-oared barge, that sets like a canoe on the waters. It

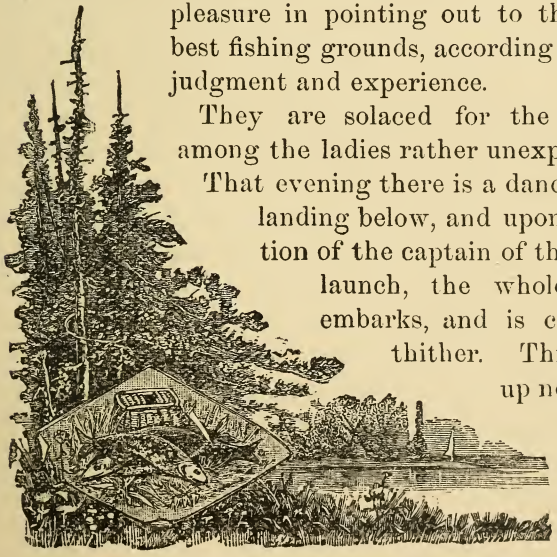
is light and graceful, with handsome trimmings, and of foreign construction in rich, dark woods, finished in the natural color. Snugly ensconsed therein, on familiar terms with the occupants, and especially the fair young man, who is the master of the craft, is Anne Belle Harding. It is very plain that the nose of the prince is out of joint. Neither prince nor poet has any such inducement for the company of the charmer as the new-comer.

The two forlorn fishermen seek their couches early that night, and George and his friends, the new arrivals, have free sway. The old piano is all of a jingle (for the new-comers are musical), and the magnificent voice of George blends with the ladies' voices, and the prince and poet toss restlessly about, unable—from the frivolity in the parlor below—to find sleep.

Finally the quartet have "sung out," and seek their quarters, much to the relief of the regular boarders, who despair of having quiet. It is, however, practically jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire; for the parties keep up a running fire of questions and conversation. One of the young ladies, judged to be George's sister, cries out, "Gawge,

what have you got in your room?" and "Gawge" takes pains to enumerate that he has "a basswood bedstead, a chair, a wash-bowl," etc. The last thing heard is "Gawge, Gawge!"

George and his friends are found to be real good fellows, on more intimate acquaintance the next day, and the prince and the poet find them "hale fellows well met" in their fishing sports, and take genuine pleasure in pointing out to them the best fishing grounds, according to their judgment and experience.



They are solaced for the rivalry among the ladies rather unexpectedly. That evening there is a dance at the landing below, and upon invitation of the captain of the steam launch, the whole party embarks, and is conveyed thither. This opens up new fields for the prince to conquer;

but the poet is content to view the scene of gaiety and hold the hat of the prince, while he "sails in." The latter is carried by storm, in an unexpected manner. After the first quadrille, a schottishe is announced, and he is approached by a superbly-formed woman, the belle of the ball, who requests his company, as there are few fancy dancers present, and they revel in the gay and giddy dance. He would be content to dance all night but for the fact the steamer is ready to depart; and, as they go, he whispers her name, "Mrs. Blank," to the poet, and consoles himself that George is nowhere.

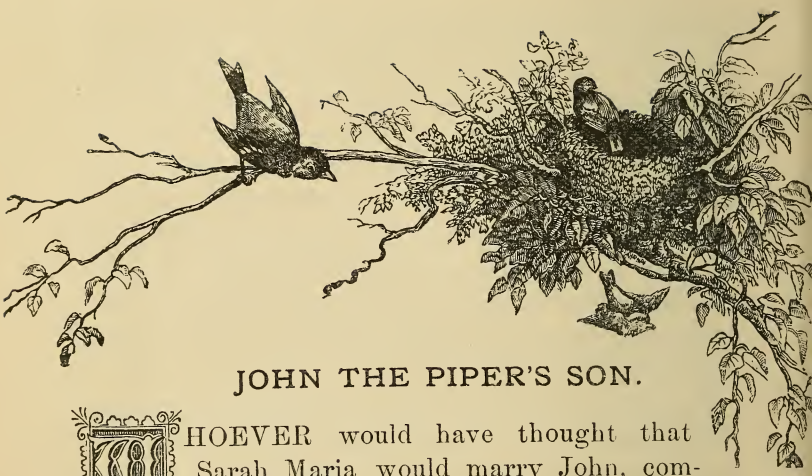
The next morning witnesses an end to the life of the prince and poet at the watering place. Dobbin is hitched up, and the pleasure-seeking pair take their departure, with the adieus and good wishes of new-found friends showered upon them. They drive down to the landing, where the dance was held the evening before. They meet a lady of their acquaintance on the hotel porch, and manage to ask about Mrs. Blank, and find that the lady in question is quite the subject of general conversation, that her advent and history are veiled in doubt, and that there is no little gossip about it anyway. They drive away wiser

(and may we not say better?) for the experience; and the prince makes the poet swear, by all that is good, that he will never say anything about the tender affair to any one.

An episode occurred as they were emerging from the thicket that skirts the road. They noticed a couple of fair young ladies, whom they had met at the party the previous evening. They were gathering red berries from the bushes, like the Indian maidens that tradition says formerly frequented the same locality.

The poet was attracted by the mysterious motions of the prince—was he?—Yes, he was actually throwing a kiss at one of the fair ones, and the poet was an eye-witness to the fact that it was returned. What an altered demeanor was that of the prince for the balance of their journey!

Their steed is soon headed on his homeward way, and the prince returns to the bosom of his family, to his wife and babies, whom he adores. The grand finale is a tableau,—red lights, with wedding drapery and orange blossoms at the marriage of the poet to his best girl.



JOHN THE PIPER'S SON.

WHOEVER would have thought that Sarah Maria would marry John, commonly known as John the Good-for-Naught? Nobody thought he was her style, the great hulking fellow who never went to school of any account. "John, John, the Piper's son, stole a pig and home he run!" was the taunt the boys flung at him one day from their rude play ground, on the common surrounding the old brown school-house, as John was riding past.

John complained to his "Dad" about that, and he spoke to Ike's—the ringleader's—father about it.

The next day when the somber form of the sire of Isaac towered up in the school-room, and he drew from the capacious folds of his great coat a long beech gad, silence prevailed.

The words of the wrathful father fell with fearful force on the stillness : " My son Isaac, I have a painful duty to perform ; I must make an example of you," and he did. Ike buried his face in his hands on the jack-knife carved desk in front of him, while the deliberate blows of the whip rained on him. Some of the example fell on to the boy in the seat with him, but nothing was lost.

The shame was more cutting to Ike than the blows, however. Every guilty boy felt their strokes just as painfully on his back ; and when the stern old man folded his garments about him and withdrew as silently as he came, an oppressiveness remained behind. There was a feeling that something had happened that forenoon, and Ike was not taunted about it.

When it came to excursions in the woods or up the river, the boys were always glad enough to have John for a leader. He knew where to find the pigeons' nests, and the best fishing grounds, and was well up in the arts of wood-craft and sportsmen.

He had grown to be nothing different when the wedding occurred. She was so refined and classical that it was all the more wonder that it happened. But she was spliced up to him, and they went to live in one of Dad's houses, for he had a number that he rented. The match was the one day's wonder and talk of the town, and then it died away.

So they settled down to life; but John did n't settle down to anything in particular, only he would take his gun and hound and go down the valley. His arts as a hunter were supreme. He could find a coon in the tallest tree, and follow the fox farther over the hill, and never was so free as when alone in the woods or with boon companions on a hunting excursion.

He got right down near to nature, and loved the rough valleys and hills. But his arts as a husband were nowhere. It came to be a settled thing that John was shiftless. His wife began to appreciate that, and the question with her was how they were going to get a living. Coon skins stretched on a board in the back yard would n't do it; fox tails made into feather dusters would n't do it; woodchuck hides cut into whip-lashes would n't do it, and that was

about all the visible income ; and to add to her discomfiture, John took to drink.

Boon companions and being a good fellow proved too much for him—the same as it has for many another whole-souled fellow. Matters went from bad to worse with them, and the poor crushed wife was compelled to withdraw from the marriage compact, and go home. Of course everybody had known how it would end, at least that is what they said then.

Sure enough, in the course of time, John had a notice served on him something like this :—

STATE OF MICHIGAN,
In the Circuit Court for the
COUNTY OF LENAWEE, } *S. S.*
IN CHANCERY.

To the Circuit Court for the County of Lenawee.

Humbly complaining showeth unto the court here, etc.

When they got out of chancery they were no more, that is, as they had been before. The divorce was granted on grounds of non-support. She was appalled by the calamity, and he was stunned by it.

The first gun that was fired on Sumter woke up John along with the rest of the country. It was stir-

ring times in Lanesville when the first company was raised. With all the glorious pomp and circumstance of war, they drilled on the village green, and all the town, and country too, was out to see them march and countermarch.

The flying flags and beating drums and shrieking fifes animated the populace and recruits alike. The doughty militia captain in epaulets and cocked hat, pranced before them greater than a general. It was "right dress," "right wheel," and "about face." Great days in Lanesville when the first recruits were raised.

John was one of the first to sign the roll, and one of the most stalwart figures in the ranks. In fact, his commanding figure won him the position of color-bearer in the regiment when it assembled at the rendezvous. He was one of the most trusty and daring men in the field. His early

habits had inured him to exposure, so that he was "no sunshine patriot or summer day soldier."

It was at Malvern that his bravery in that hail of shot and shell won him his bars. Bravo, John! in the midst of death he had found a purpose in life. Antietam, Fredericksburgh, Chancellorsville, Gettysburgh, the Wilderness, and Appomattox marked his career.

Sarah Maria had not been indifferent to the stirring scenes of strife. She was the central figure in the ladies' aid society in the little village. It is to be expected that some softening influence worked on the hearts of both, for when Captain John Smith came marching home again, from Old Virginia, hurrah! there was a grand reunion at 'Squire Brown's, on the hill. Dad and Captain John were there, Ike and the rest of the boys that came back—don't let us forget Sarah Maria—and God again joined together what man had put asunder.

> "A union of hearts and a union of hands,
> And the flag of our Union forever."

By the way, John is a deacon in our church now, and Sarah Maria is a useful member of the church and society.

THE LOST FATHER.

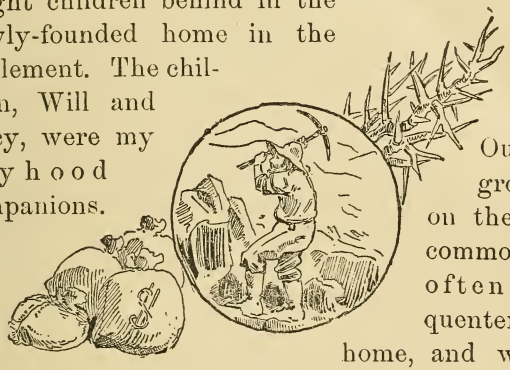
MY grandfather told me, years ago, about the merry blacksmith, who, in the early days of Pegtown, was known as the happy huntsman of the valley. He was jolly alike at the forge or in the forest, and his laughing jest and side-splitting stories were as keen as his eye on the rifle-sights.

He mingled his good-natured songs with the blasts of the bellows, and the merry time-beats with the blows of his hammer on the anvil, and turned his tunes with the turning of the irons in the forge, the blows of his hammer on the anvil meantime striking off a shower of sparks before which the barefooted and barelegged youngsters would retreat in dismay

But they would come back again. There was a fond fascination for them in the fund of bear and ghost stories the blacksmith was wont to relate to the open-mouthed urchins, until every one of them became such cowards that they ventured out of nights only in fear and trembling that magnified

every bowlder into a ghost and every stump into a man-eater.

All I knew of the blacksmith was that he had gone to the gold fields of California in the excitement of the years following 1848, leaving his wife and two bright children behind in the newly-founded home in the settlement. The children, Will and Lucy, were my boyhood companions.



Our playground was on the village common. I was often a frequenter of their home, and we grew up together in the village school.

Letters were luxuries in those days, and my remembrance is that the high hope of that household was to hear from "father." The first missives in that rugged and unaccustomed hand breathed a hope that their fortune would be forth-coming. They told of the discomforts of camp life, and how they got along in the "diggin's." The hopes of the

trustful wife were suspended on a slender thread that grew weaker and was broken when the letters ceased entirely. The last rumor that found its way to the village was that he had been seen with others flocking to new finds on the Frazer River. That was the last news that came back of that "father."

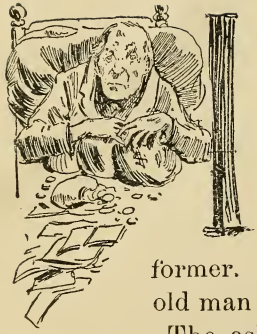
The mother, despairing, grew weary and laid down her burden of life. Will and Lucy were consigned to the care of a guardian, and the common welfare of the villagers as well, and grew to useful positions in manhood and womanhood. The village grew, and the old homestead became valuable for business property, affording a competence in its disposal. With the years to come the brother and sister became reconciled to the loss of their mother. It is well we mourn—no life is rounded and complete without sorrow. But it is better that we forget, and let the past mold itself into pleasant recollections in our minds, that we may more manfully perform our obligations to the living.

But the thought would come back to them, "Where is father?" Him they could not forget. Would he come back to them? Children of their own cluster about their happy homes, and they jour-

ney on to eternity. The old village has sunk into decay and is scarce marked save by name; but the hope of the return of the lost father will never decay.

He did come back. One day, by the western train, there came to town a strange, old-fashioned, and weather-beaten man, belted about the waist and rough shod. No one knew him. He sought his children, and with them is passing his declining years. With his grandchildren upon his knees, he recounts new bear stories and tales of ghosts that stalk on the far-away shores of the Pacific. The search for gold had taken him far from civilization and the mails, and he delved away after the precious hoard in the hope of returning to make his family happy. The one regret that clouded the joy of the reunion was that the mother was not there to share it with them.

TOO LATE!



I HAVE seen him through the window, bolstered in his great chair. The old man was stern and gray, waiting only for interest and death. For him the latter came too swiftly on apace, and all too slowly the former. Yet they were the destiny the old man had marked out for himself.

The ashes of the fires of his love had long since grown cold on the altar of his affection, save for sordid gain. His avarice cried, "Give, give!" No matter over whose wrecked hopes and downtrodden fortunes came gain for him, it brought exultation and no pity—business was business.

For him life was no summer afternoon's jaunt through the green fields. Nature, in her loveliness, strewed no spring flowers at his feet; and on the cool breezes of the woodland neither, for him, did the birds pipe their lay. Rather with the rude, rough

side of life did he struggle in contact with, and arrive at, success by main strength and endurance.

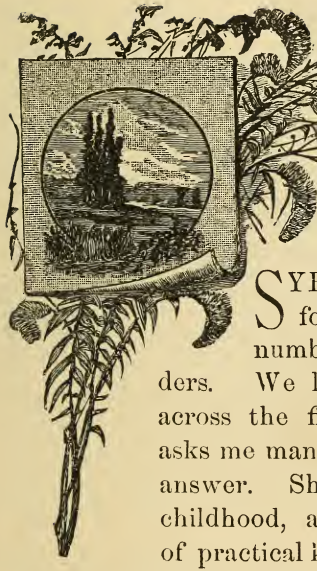
She who had known his early affections, and might have shared his joys and sorrows, arrived at the idea that life had for her a sorrow of its own, a blighted affection, an ignored existence. His cold, grasping life afforded no satisfaction to her, and snubbed at the beginning, she sank from nonentity to the grave.

The day came when John Morris lay on his death-bed. He had sent for his son, whom he had ignored and left to shift for himself, and who had sunk, through despair, to degradation. The old man's heart had relented in his last days.

As the son entered his room, his heart softened still more toward him,—a green place in the old man's life, and there had not been many of them. He opened his arms and cried, "My son, forgive me for years of neglect; all I have is yours henceforth and forever!" But the son fell on the covers, and cried, "Alas! father, it is too late; your bounty comes too late for me; I am a bloated wreck. In my misery I have sought refuge in the cup, and gone down, down, down. My wife and babies have gone

clothed in rags. They may enjoy it now, but I am irrevocably and hopelessly lost. My prospects in life were fair, and I yearned for your succor. I had a fair wife and fond children, and all that God endows a brave man with—all but your sympathy, father. Now, I am just ragged 'Bill Morris!' "

The old man's breast heaved with emotion. The canker had entered his heart. When they looked on him again, the old man was dead.



UP HILL AND DOWN DALE.

SYBIL is six, together we are forty-six; quite a respectable number of years on two shoulders. We like a quiet jaunt together across the fields and woods, and she asks me many questions that are hard to answer. She has fairly budded into childhood, and is fast storing a stock of practical knowledge that will last her a lifetime, and grow in accumulations.

I answer her questions as best I may, and note with pleasure the quiet surprise and satisfaction evinced by her as she comprehends matters hitherto unknown to her. I am glad to perceive the correctness of many of her own observations related to me.

All the winter she has reveled in the delights of the snow that fell as pure and undefiled as her gaiety,

and now spring has come. The showers of April have placed the bloom upon the earth. Every green thing is putting forth its kind. The fruit-trees are laden with their blossoms, the tulips have unfolded, and the purple bloom is on the lilac. The maples are disclosing a light shade of green. O'er all the lawn luxuriantly waves, in a million tiny spears, the green blades of grass, that present a smooth, pleasing prospect to the eye. The white bloom of the orchards throws a white-veiled wedding halo over the land. It is the old earth that has found a new love in the gaily-decked maiden, Spring, who has come tripping merrily through the forest and over the meadow to greet him. Nature, in her loveliness, has chosen the best colors to deck the scene; man could not paint them better.

To-day the rain had ceased, and over the land smiled the glorious sunshine, broken only by the fleecy clouds that sailed in the sky. It was like unto a perfect day, and the young spring-time was putting forth with renewed vigor. It was just the time, withal, for an afternoon's jaunt by Sybil and me up hill and down dale.

So we sallied forth together, rapidly gained the

outskirts of the town, and emerged into the village commons. She knows about them, and asks me about some adjoining fields: "Why ain't they commons too?" My answer is, 'Because they are inclosed and occupied and not thrown open to common use. In fact, the very field she points to now, in *my* youthful day was residence property. I narrated to her that here in this secluded place stood the log cabin of an aged grandfather and grandmother, long since dead and gone. Nothing, save a thrifty maple, marks the site of the home of their declining years. In the change of property the ploughman tills the field, not knowing that here was once a happy and humble home, where existed all the hopes and anxieties that pervade the human breast; all are now mingled with the dust, and hope alone is triumphant and unforgotten.

The low-lying pasture lands and gardens before us were in those days a swampy morass, penetrated by the corduroy road, and resorted to by the berry-pickers. The conquering hand of man, aided by a liberal tax for a county drain, has been at work, and the bit of wilderness has indeed been made to blossom as the rose.

The prospect is fair and pleasing to the eye, and we journey on, clambering over fences, skirting hillsides, avoiding suspicious-looking cows, and fearing some coltish-looking horses may charge on us, with their native instinct, in a squadron like cavalry. In our exertions we begin to warm up and feel the sunshine on our backs and the weight of our clothing. Over another fence makes us quite safe.

We skirt the margins of some yet unclaimed swamps, wherein the brown and sere relics of last year's cat-tails are visible, and notice the white flowers of the box-wood trees, beyond our reach because of the water in the swamps. The cat-birds call, and flit about within their marshy precincts.

The half-cleared woodland lies in a grass-covered slope before us, and is clothed in beauty. It is like green lanes and pastures down through the gap in the fence. The umbrella shaped mandrake grows in profusion, and our pathway is strewn with flowers. The musical and discordant cries of the birds are heard on every hand. Careening like a ship in the air, a wide-winged hawk sails above us. As he sails in majesty, he is attended by convoy or corsair in the small bird whose incessant attentions he can nei-

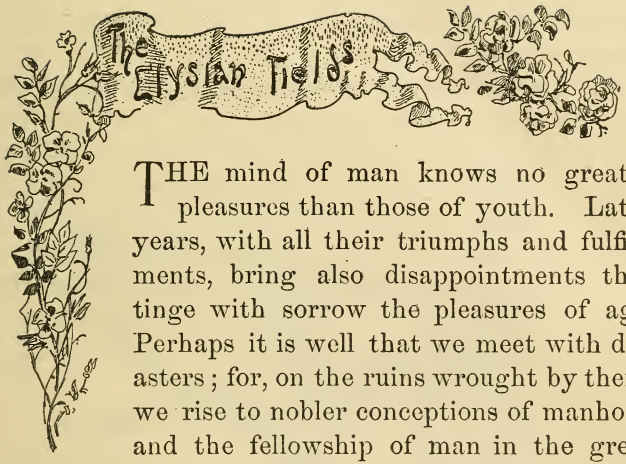
ther repel nor escape if he desires to. Only when he settles momentarily on a dry limb, does his apparent tormentor seem to cease harassing.

We seat ourselves beneath an oak tree, and my young companion interests herself in gathering some last year's acorns, and noticing their beauty and symmetry. Presently we are up and away, and come to the bluffs of the river. Now our river is better known as the creek, and it meanders through the bottom-lands in a tortuous course, sometimes faster over gravelly rapids, ofttimes slower in eddies and deep holes under the bank of the bends. In the summer time, under sun and drouth, it shrinks to small proportions; but it is always pure and fresh; running, as it does to-day, in the warm sunshine, in ripples over the gravel stones, and hurrying on, on forever.

We pick up some flat slate stones on its wash-gravel beds, and skip them on its surface. The minnows swarm in the quiet back-water of the sand-bank, and lying on the gravelly bottom we observe a school of hand-long stone-rollers, which flit here and there in their occasional display of activity. We notice that in swift water it is ofttimes easier for them to swim with the stream, like humanity.

Some cattle are cropping the grass near by, and one of them wanders down by the river side and draws long, refreshing draughts of the living water. When mid-summer comes, the herd will seek seclusion from the heat and insects by retreating to the water. A scene of contentment without a rival is an old cow standing in the deep-running water, ruminating over her cud and giving an occasional switch with her tail at a fugitive fly.

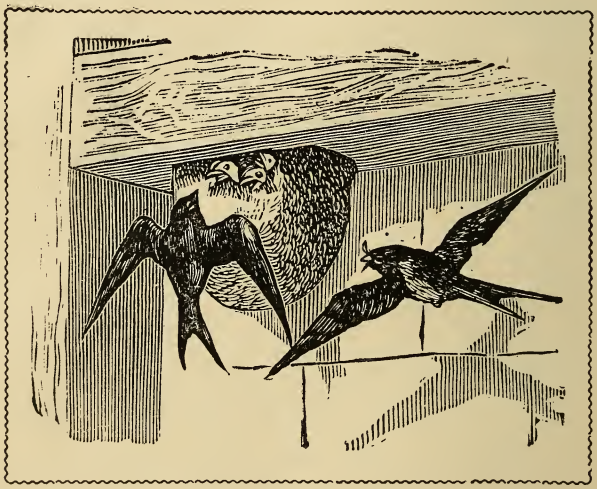
Sybil discovers that the bottom land is covered with blue violets, and she sets to gathering them and requests my assistance, but I find that my avoirdupois is rather against my bending over, and not what it used to be. Up the hill-side she adds some ferns to her bouquet and on top of the bluff some white flowers and lilies; so, with shells from the shore and flowers from the forest, we march home with laurels for the dear ones we left behind.



THE mind of man knows no greater pleasures than those of youth. Later years, with all their triumphs and fulfillments, bring also disappointments that tinge with sorrow the pleasures of age. Perhaps it is well that we meet with disasters; for, on the ruins wrought by them, we rise to nobler conceptions of manhood and the fellowship of man in the great brotherhood. They cause us to have a keener relish for the simple joys of our youth. With what fondness we recur to life on the old farm in boyhood days! The boy on the farm is as happy as a lark, and as free to commune with the better side of nature as the songster of the meadows. His knowledge of things enlarging by constant contact with the great forces about him, he is a dullard indeed

who does not have his wits sharpened, and be better prepared for the battle of life, from having been a boy on a farm.

That boy knew all about the orchard. For him



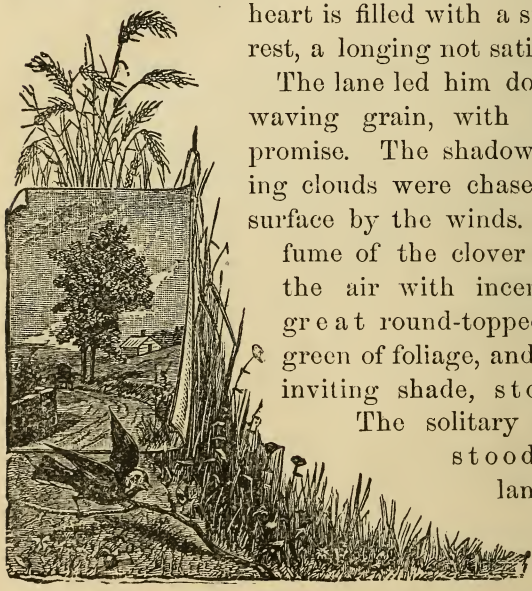
the orchard trees blossomed and fruited and ripened in the summer sun. Beyond the orchard a huge willow swayed its languishing foliage. From the bank beneath its shade bubbled the waters of the

spring, trickling down the ravine out of the half barrel that received it. How often he has laid his straw hat on the bank and, with his body prone to earth, drank from the fountain-head the cool, clean liquid, and arose refreshed in body and spirit!

Up the lane, the great thoroughfare of the farm, the cows in his charge were wont to come of an evening into the barn-yard, following the tinkling bell of their leader. What a center of life the old barn-yard was! The great straw stack afforded tumbling ground for his idle hours. Beneath the eaves of the brown, weather-beaten barn, the swallows had built their tenements of clay, and flitted in and out of the star-like opening in the gable, and the doves winged their flight from their cote.

With gun on his shoulder in squirrel time, he was wont to go down the lane, through the Elysian fields. That waving corn, standing in soldierly rows and flapping its green ribbons in the summer breeze, he had in the spring time thought over, and fought over every furrow that had been turned for its reception, as he had marched up and down the field. When the tiny blades had just appeared, and he had marshaled his hosts against the invading forces of weeds, and

rode rough shod through the ranks of green coats with a double-shovel plow, in his mind he had also won battles in other fields of action, where the boy had pictured himself a man. Involved in a day-dream, his vision was a poem of life. What boy has not had them? The dream of life has extended from then to now, and yet the battle is not won. The heart is filled with a strange unrest, a longing not satisfied.

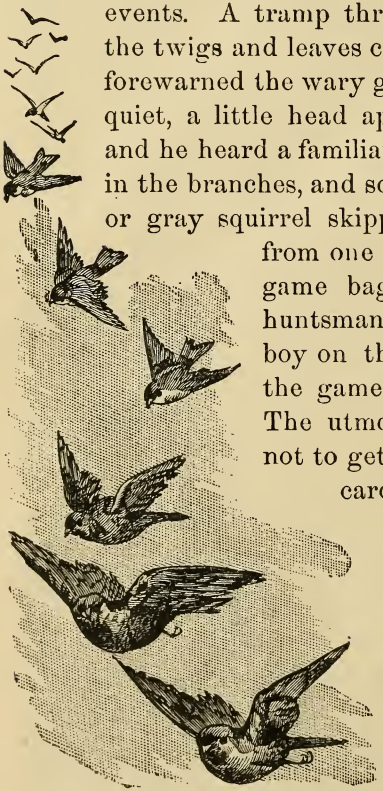


The lane led him down by the waving grain, with its golden promise. The shadows of shifting clouds were chased over its surface by the winds. The perfume of the clover field filled the air with incense. The great round-topped maple, green of foliage, and with cool, inviting shade, stood afield. The solitary stub that stood in the lane was the watch-tower of

a marauding hawk, who, from his outpost, watched the fowls of the barn-yard, ready to pounce down upon his unsuspecting victims. This old robber was as big a coward as he was a thief, and a shot at him needed to be taken at long range, lest he take alarm and sail away. The coarse cries of the crows were provoking, but you can't fool an old crow if you try.

The half pasture, half woodland at the end of the lane was to him a picture of pastoral loveliness. Through its soft soil the brook had broken its way, and was spanned by a rude bridge. Minnows chased in its shallows and rapids, and over miniature falls it emptied into a huge box, where the sheep were cleaned for shearing. In this sylvan retreat sleek cattle browsed and were startled by his huntsman-like appearance. Farther on in the denser woods, and skirting the fences of the ripening grain-fields, he sought the nimble squirrel with varying success. They were apt to catch sight of him before he did them, and his first knowledge of their presence was often a frisky tail disappearing in the distance on the rail fence, and seeking refuge in some lofty tree. That sturdy oak had long been marked as the home of an ancient fox squirrel, whose activity had preserved his life through several hunting seasons.

Our young hunter concluded to sit down and await events. A tramp through the woods, with the twigs and leaves crackling under his feet, forewarned the wary game. Soon, if he kept quiet, a little head appeared around a tree and he heard a familiar barking not far away in the branches, and some venturesome black or gray squirrel skipped along the ground from one tree to another. His game bag well filled, no true huntsman knew better than the boy on the farm how to dress the game in a proper manner. The utmost skill was required not to get a hair on the delicate carcass about to be consigned with pride to the good mother to be prepared for supper. The quarters boiled in gravy made a feast fit for an epicure.



In September,

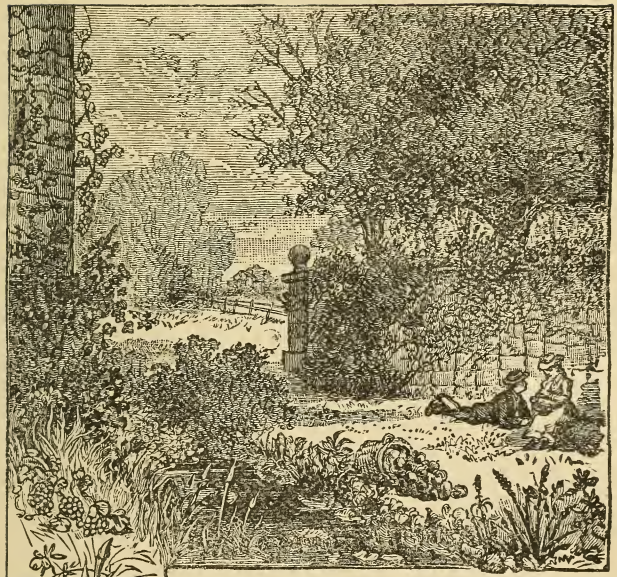
when the seed wheat was in the ground, the pigeons darkened the heavens as they flew in long lines overhead. He had become more of a huntsman then, and in the field or margin of the forest sought them, at rest or on wing, with great success. They wheeled in their flight with strange fascination and came within range, and he filled many a pot pie with his easy skill.

He had heard it recited at the fireside that at an early day nobler game frequented those forests, when they were more dense. In the garret hung a trusty rifle, with old-fashioned sights and a rude stock. This old firearm had done service in pursuit of the fleet-footed deer. He could scarcely comprehend the stories of "buck fever" related with great gusto.

He had maintained inviolate secrecy about a flock of wild turkeys that resorted to the great swamp in the summer. In the fall they were roaming about the woods, and in his first contact with them he understood perfectly about "buck fever." He was utterly unable to act. Next time he did better, and the first one killed he shouldered and marched home with in triumph. His sport was not systematic, trained sport, but was just such as a green country

boy would have when the Indian summer threw its halo around the earth, and the sky assumed its peculiar smoky haze. The corn was standing afield in great shocks. It was almost a pastime to attack one of these and despoil it of its great golden ears, while the story and jest and badinage went its merry round among the huskers, and the great heaps of yellow corn lay in piles about the Elysian fields.

Those were the halcyon days. They never will return to you. Great heaps of yellow gold may fill your coffers, but you never can buy back the days of your youth with their unalloyed pleasures.



OVER THE GARDEN WALL.

OUR garden has been crying for rain. This morning the fresh-blowing wind tossed the branches of the great elm about like waves of the billowy ocean. A robin clinging to the topmost branch rode on the wave like a ship at sea, as the western gale tossed them to and fro. But the winds dispelled the storm, the sun shone out in all

his glory, and the day has been at midsummer heat.

This afternoon, however, there is an ominous rolling of thunder in the distance, and the low-lying darkness along the horizon portends the storm. The rushing winds sway the foliage, and the strange, rustling voice of nature, borne by the breath of the storm, is broken only by the sharp cry of the birds. The sky becomes overcast, and the first pattering drops of rain come scattering to the earth as a premonition of that to come. Nature is hushed, and waits expectant to drink the invigorating draught.

The great sprinkler of the heavens sifts down the precious fluid in greater profusion, then eases a moment, and then dashes down a larger supply. The vivid flashes of lightning are followed by fearful crashes of thunder overhead that seem to jar the foundations of the earth.

The wind subsides, and the calmly falling, welcome rain is drank up eagerly by the earth in its gladness. The vigor of our garden is renewed, and with the cessation of the storm the cheering notes of the birds are heard, and in the sunlight a glorious rainbow spans the eastern heavens.

Alongside the garden wall soon will the June roses

flourish—red rose and white. Floating with them into the wind come the notes of the flute, viol, and bassoon from the great hall, as the love-sick and crazy youth lingers in the fancy from the poet laureate's passionate tale, his sad heart crying for his love to come into the garden.

Over the garden wall will clamber the morning glory, gaily swinging its bright-colored bell. On its top the vain peacock is wont to spread his gorgeous panoply of the orient. Within the precincts of the garden, companion to the vain-glorious poppy, the gay sunflower doth turn its golden face to the summer sun, and the hollyhock rears its head. Therein a sacred root of pie-plant grows, and sage to savor grandam's sausage and tea as well, and the ancient and honorable gooseberry; while the apple, peach, and pear line the borders of the garden fair.

On the farther limits of the garden grows a fringe of wild-wood. Wild flowers spring up in the leafy mold of its retreats. The wild grape has spread over the fence like a green hedge-row. The white blossoms of the elder and bush and briar flourish there in profusion. The wide-spreading branches of the walnut are laden with nuts, presaging the cheer by the

winter's fire. Then the wintry blasts may blow without, but to the ruddy glow of our hearth-stone we shall draw near for warmth and comfort.

Over the trellis of the summer kitchen the grape has wound its way, clinging with small but powerful tendrils, like the affections that entwine about the objects of our adoration, and hold us steadfast to them. The connection of the summer kitchen with the garden is like the relation of the luscious berry to the toothsome shortcake. Granted that it is well supplied with the fresh products of the garden, what a peculiar pride there is in culling the vegetables fresh from our own soil, something raised by the sweat of our own brow !

A well-kept garden is like unto a perfect character, inasmuch as it is developed by cultivation. Perhaps you know some particularly amiable lady whose graces of character are distinctly marked. Birth has done something for her, to be sure, as good soil has something to do with the garden ; but cultivation has done more for her, the same as the weeds are carefully eradicated from the garden, and the soil stirred about the tender plants that only the good and useful may thrive. They stand the sunshine,

the storm, and the wind. How strong are the plants that have been beaten and blown about! The character that has been through the storms and sorrows of adversity is like them. In contrast with them is the succulent growth springing up in the wild-wood retreat, that grow slender of stalk and weak of fiber, like a weak character easily crushed.

If this amiable lady is fortunately linked with a helpmeet of equal kindness, great is the impress of the lives of that happy pair in the community where they live.

Meantime night is approaching, and robin red breast hops along the ground in search of his evening meal, and drags from his lair the struggling earthworm. From an apple tree the orchard orioles pour forth their gladsome melody in a flood of song. The brood of white, fluffy chicks, just out, seek the seclusion of the mother's wings. Soon will only the sound of the cricket be heard, when the world, too, will have sought the seclusion of darkness and rest beneath the wings of night.

THE ROMANCE OF A SAP-BUSH.

AMONG the best sweets nature has in store for us is the sap of the sugar maple. The first bright warm days of February the groceryman brings out the remnant of last season's stock of maple sugar, and melting it over with the addition of the proper amount of "muscovado," presents to the palates of the public the product of the first run of the season.

Of course it is not our groceryman that does this, and it is only a popular myth anyway, but that old fiction has been flung about the country so long that I know, and you know, a woman that believes it.

Not long after this sugar-making actually begins, thawy days and light freezing night cause the sap to run. The flow is accelerated by the fall of a light snow, commonly called the "sugar snow," that melts rapidly, dampening the ground beneficially for the maple.

The old-fashioned sugar-camp, with its primitive

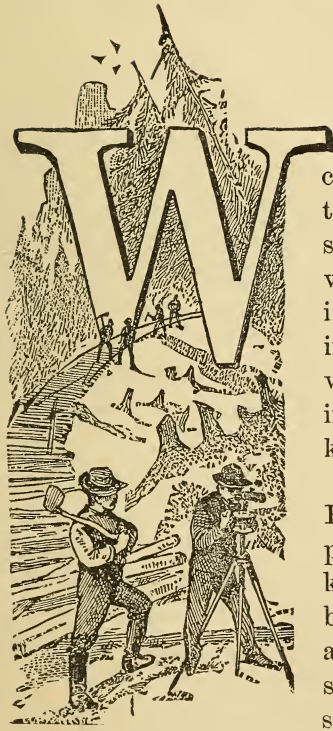
appliances, is a delightful reminiscence of happy days. It was a common center where liberality and hospitality were displayed open-handed. The early settler tapped the trees with home-made spiles made of sumac, with the pith removed. The typical Chinaman of the tea chest, with a yoke across his shoulders, and his burden of tea chests balanced on long hooks at either end, is a fair conception of the method of sap gathering.

"They are going to sugar off down to ——— s tonight," was *open sesame* in those days to the surrounding swains. You were young then, and still revel in the delights of the rude shelter in the woods, the ruddy fire in the improvised arch, and the seething caldron of syrup. The bearer of a saucer and spoon, the most delicious flavor on the tongue to your thinking was syrup waxed on snow. The most enchanting thing you knew was a pair of bright eyes that beamed on you. No doubt you thought seriously of them in those days, and they sparkle in your fancy yet.

But they were not your destiny. You revisited the old neighborhood not long since, and found Bright Eyes the mother of two charming children. They

are being brought up, and not merely raised, but are being educated in the neighboring town, and you feel that your old flame's mission in the world is being fulfilled. Is yours? You see behind the civilization of that home a strain of culture drifted from old York State and the New England coast.

The modern sugar-maker has many improved appliances, — metal spiles, a finely-regulated sugar house, pans and purifiers;—but none of them can rob you of your ideal of years ago. You pore over old ledgers and day-books, and growl because collections are slow, but you are still loyal to that old romance of a sap-bush.



THE ROSE OF ERIN.

WITH the railroad a new civilization was coming into the country. The original settlers, the old Pennsylvania Dutchmen, who had immigrated to, and settled in, the Hoosier country, were beginning to feel the impulse of the new and keener Yankee blood.

Even the Celt was there. He came in with his earthly possessions loaded on a donkey cart—bedding, wife, babies, frying-pan, and all, a motley crew that soon set up housekeeping in the shanties on the St. Joe, and the donkey and dump-cart became *habitues* of the "cut and fill." A genuine store, with a Yankee

store-keeper from 'way over the line, in Michigan, was indeed an innovation.

Even Sunday assumed another air, and the old school-house, that stood down by the swale, was brightened up and did service for a Sunday-school. Some of the attendants might not have cared for it in their former homes, but now they were zealous for it because it smacked of the old home institutions. Colonel Winters, the bluff and hearty old contractor, had a deal to do with it. He said, "Everything is so new here, and so rough, that we must do something to make us think of home."

The country was but half cleared up, and the hazel brush covered a portion of that. The roads ran in no regular direction, but led most anywhere, and carried you through the woods to some Dutchman's possessions, and ended there. The Hoosier might have numbered his acres by the hundred. The old log house was, perhaps, habitable; but the large barn, with a hip roof and capacious mows, was a marvel of architecture and the pride of the Hoosier's heart. The bowl of buttermilk that his frau set before you was without the sweetening that your mother was wont to give you. If you were a

boy, you noticed that. They lived plain, but they amassed wealth and acres.

But now the "Air-Line" was steering its way through their possessions. Traders at the store, from the surrounding country, as a rule, rode horse-back, and tied their steeds to the rude hitching-posts across the road from the store, in a clearing of the hazel brush, and fashioned out of saplings by the hands of the ingenious store-keeper, who was manager, clerk, and man-of-all-work at the same time.

Huckleberries figured largely as a commodity in the exchange for goods. The Dutch women would ask, "*Sprechen sie Deutsch?*" and the store-keeper's entire stock of the German vocabulary would only permit him to answer, "*Nein.*"

Then they would bring forward the children, who, more fortunately, had learned the English tongue at the schools, and they would act as interpreters in the financial transactions.

There were several strata of society thrown together in the, as yet, unnamed railroad town. There were the Yankee-blooded store-keeper's and contactor's families and others of that ilk, that might

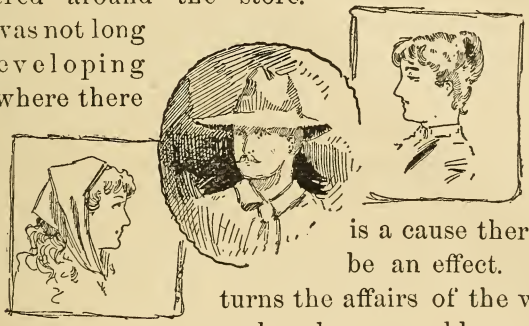
be classed as one. Another layer was the Hibernian element, and the remaining superstructure of society was the native old Silurian Hoosiers.

In a new community like this, from necessity, caste and distinction are laid aside. So the occasional dances, gotten up to relieve the tedium of the place, were *open sesame* to all. A house, conveniently located on the main road, had arrived at the dignity of being called a "hotel," the unfinished and partitionless second story of which was the scene of the dancing festivities, where they "hoed 'er down."

Saturday afternoon was a great half-holiday, too, and upon the commons sides were chosen, and the male portion of the community joined in an old-fashioned game of base ball with great gusto.

And the Fourth of July—a place in the woods was underbrushed out, alongside the line, and every man, woman, and child joined in a Sunday-school celebration, which was made complete with tables heavily laden with frosted and pyramid cakes. A young lawyer from the county seat, who was an aspirant for Congressional honors, orated in a grandiloquent manner. It was very much in those days as it is now, the lawyers did all the talking and most of the going to Congress.

Such a place could not be long without its love affair. Neither was there a lack of belles in its society, —a *casus belli*. There was Helen, the fair Hibernian lass, a rosy-cheeked beauty, who seemed a waif thrown astray amid the Irish shanties; and there was blithesome Mary, of the Yankee settlement that clustered around the store.



It was not long in developing that where there is a cause there will be an effect. Love turns the affairs of the world, and makes even old men silly. The old song is, "Love Rules the Camp, the Court, and the Grove." The cause in this instance was these two beauties, and the effect was the young surveyor, Coburn.

He paid attention to both at the dances, and soon the hitherto united people were divided upon the question, not only as to who would bear away the

"prize," for Coburn was looked upon with a great deal of reverence in those parts, his professions being regarded as a high attainment.

Which girl would get him, became the absorbing theme; all shanty-town of course rallied to the standard of fair Helen, and not without cause either, for she was a royal beauty.

When Patrick lit his pipe, out on the big "fill," in the morning, and punching the weed more compactly into the bowl of the pipe with his finger, gave some short, vigorous puffs with a peculiar smack of the lips, resting his foot on the shovel, he said: "Hoi, Moike, did yez go up to the donce last noight, and did yez notice Misther Coburn, the boss of thim surveyors, the foine gentleman that he is, donce with Mistress Helen? A nice couple they are, too; good luck to the loikes of um"

And Michael said: "A fine little leddy that—a fine wife she would make for Misther Coburn, shure, better nor that Yankee gurll."

Up at the store, an imprisoned gray squirrel was whirling the tin revolving wheel of his cage, anxiously watched by a lonesome boy, who longed for far-away Michigan. Several men, who were laying off from

the job, were holding down sundry boxes and kegs, and aiming tobacco juice at an imaginary receptacle under the stove, with varying success.

The silence of some moments was broken by the emphatic exclamation of a Wolverine:—

"I'll be damned if I can see what Coburn finds in that Irish girl to admire."

Whereat the store-keeper, who is supposed to be on confidential terms with Mr. Coburn, says: "I'm going to see about that myself; I'll have a talk with Coburn."

"There's no denying she's a purty girl; but Mary, she's a different sort o' beauty," chimed in a long, lank setter.

Coburn gave forth no sign, and gossip grew hotter. Which would win? that was the absorbing theme that agitated and divided the colony.

One day, as Coburn was engaged in surveying the boundaries of the line through the woodlands that came up to the grade, he heard a sweet voice, in a pathway of the woods, singing,—

"Come over the sea,
Maiden, with me,
Mine through sunshine, storm, and snows;

Seasons may roll,
But the true soul
Burns the same, where'er it goes.
Let Fate frown on, so we love and part not;
'T is life where thou art, 't is death where thou art not;
Then come over the sea,
Maiden, with me,
Come wherever the wild wind blows;
Seasons may roll,
But the true soul
Burns the same, where'er it goes."

He recognized the voice as Helen's, and clapping his hands, shouted, "Capital!" as the young lady emerged from the pathway, unconscious of the nearness of any one.

"Bravo! You do well with a love song," he reiterated.

"Who knew that you were around?" said Helen. "I wouldn't have been so free with my song."

"Too late to regret it now," said he; "besides, I am something of a singer myself."

Helen urged him to sing for her, and he sang,—

"Sweet life, if life were stronger,
Earth clear of years that wrong her,
Then two things might live longer,
Two sweeter things than they,—
Delight, the rootless flower,
And love, the bloomless bower,
Delight that lives an hour,
And love that lives a day."

"Don't you think love is more constant than that, Mr. Coburn?" said Helen.

"Oh, yes; that's only the words of the poet for it, and they are often misanthropes," said he. "Love is the most lasting thing," he added.

"I should hope so," she replied.

"Now that I have entertained you with my song," said Coburn, "I wish you would help me run this chain," and together they measured the distances with the chain, and many times after that they handled the chain together—who knows but they were measuring the links of a life? And at evening, Coburn would take his fishing rod and stroll down the river path to a favorite place by the willows, where they threw their shadows into the dark, glassy pool, and cast his line into the water.

Oftentimes was he accompanied by the little Irish lass, to whom he would relate strange and boyish stories of his school life and struggle to get an education, and about his plans for the future; how he had been reading law, and hoped to receive his diploma, and to hang out his "shingle"; whereat she wanted to know what that meant, and he laughed and explained that it was a lawyer's sign; and he grew more confidential, and said that there were two ways for honor open to the able attorney—the judge's bench and politics.

Fame and profit might be a long time in coming, he said, and he told her of a bosom friend of his boyhood days, with whom he had mutual aspirations,—how they had planned and studied together, planning for a place in the world.

His friend had gone into literature, and met with many bitter disappointments. He had tried newspaper work without achieving any distinction. Naturally of a poetic tendency, his poems did not attract attention.

One day he sent a homely, rough-shod poem of home life to a city paper, and awoke to find himself famous and copied far and wide. All this after years

of disappointment and seeming failure. He had simply found his theme.

Now his friend was sought after and wealthy. His own ambitions had not been satisfied as yet, but he still had the determination to win. All this was a revelation of a higher life to the quaint little lady by his side, that she had not dreamed of, and made her wonder at the poverty of her own surroundings.

Daily, at the Yankee settlement, too, Coburn met the charming Mary. That he saw much in her quiet ways to admire, there was no wonder. To a man with his tendencies, a wife like her with her superior education and tact, could but be a helpmeet indeed and in truth.

Meantime great gangs of men were moving mountains of earth. Across the flats of St. Joe the great embankments were only separated by the waters of the river. The trestle-work of the massive bridge would soon connect them. Through the wilderness, westward, the pathway for the iron horse was being pushed.

The summer and early fall were dry, and no mistake. Everything was drying up. The back-water in the great mill-dams along Fish Creek had disap-

peared, leaving exposed acres and acres of old stumps and stubs and logs, and great, reeking bottoms, that sent over the surrounding country, like a black fiend, a miasmic mist of death. It shook its filmy fingers far and near, and there was scarce a home in the region but paid homage to its call. Young and blooming childhood and happy youth most often fell its prey. In the Hoosier homes the mortality among children was something appalling, taken as a whole. There were no doctors at hand; the nearest one was at the Center, ten miles away. His ride was, of necessity, large, and he could not call often.

Now it was that the superior knowledge and skill of the Yankee store-keeper were brought into requisition. Florence Nightingale could not have done more. Here, there, everywhere his presence was needed. The Irish cabins on the river bluffs were invaded by the disease, and the children of some of the Yankee colonists were attacked. If a pulse was low, the store-keeper would fire it up with brandy, shake it in the teeth of the fell malaria. It was a mortal combat by day, continued through the long watches of the night. Sunday-school was no longer held; the dancing festivities were suspended; no

longer, on the village green, in the half-holiday, did the ball-players resort.

Finally, one day, word came to the store that Helen had the malady. There was no lack of volunteers to go and battle with the disease; but Mary, the good soul, insisted that she was the proper one to go. She was determined about the matter. She met Coburn at the door of the rude habitation by the river—he was already there. There was an anxious expression on his face.

There was an unspoken truce upon the past from the moment their eyes met, a suspension of all earthly things.

They went into the cabin to do their duty, nobly and heroically, and opposed the harsh disease, step by step; but it enveloped the form. It was useless.

A wild Eglantine rose, that Helen had herself found in the forest and planted, screened the window. The roses had blossomed and faded away, and like them Helen was fading and dying.

There was silence in the house the night that Helen died. There were soft, tip-toed steps, and naught but the steady tick, tick, tick, tick of the clock was heard. Outside, the crickets filled the

mournful air of the night with their chirpings. Below, the river was rushing away in the darkness. In hushed stillness, Nature waited for the death angel to bear a human life on to eternity. Away from kindred and home and friends, across the dark, unfathomable night, the black-winged angel flies in the solemn, mysterious darkness. When shall we see the morning light?

Oh, the anguished heart of that poor mother, as she crosses herself to Mary the mother of God! Oh, the grief of that poor father, as he reverences the Saints! Father and mother are the dearest, truest friends on earth.

When the last moment was coming, and Helen herself saw it, she took the hand of Coburn and placed it in Mary's, and said, "God bless you both; God bless you both, and keep you. I had a dream of life; my faith stood in its way; it is gone now. Good-by." Let us draw a curtain over death. It is better so, if Helen is happy in heaven.

That old colony is scattered now. The donkey and the dump carts, and the people with mother wit from the Emerald Isle, from whose ranks have risen some

of our brightest lights, went on ; for when the road came through, corner lots did not have the value some people imagined they would have, and it would take too many years for the slow-going country to develop anyway to suit the active Yankees ; so they mostly drifted away, and left what there was of the new civilization in the hands of the old settlers.

Coburn and Mary were married. She has been a true woman and a faithful helpmeet. He has been an able jurist and a righteous judge. The bright little flower of a girl that blossomed and faded on the St. Joe, they will always remember with mutual admiration.

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